

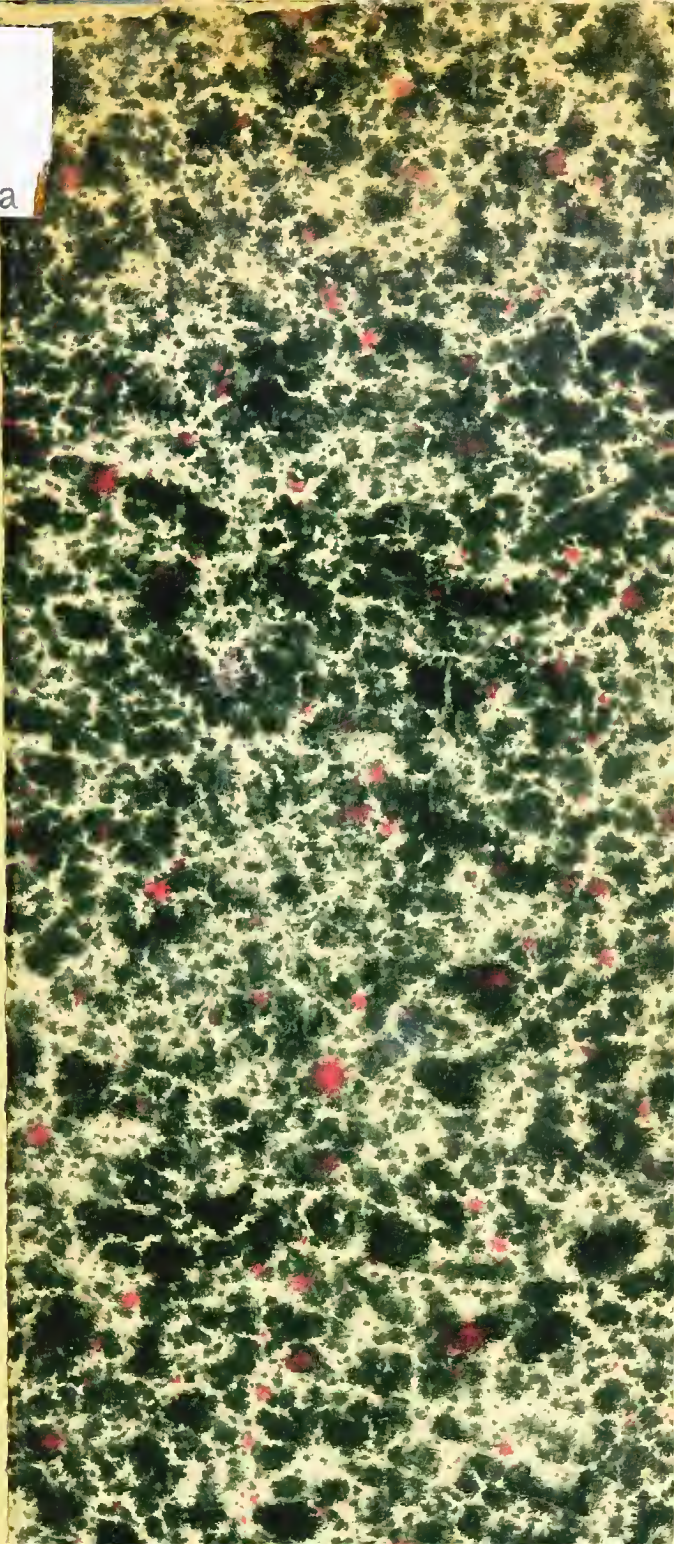
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R E A S O N S

A G A I N S T A

S E P A R A T I O N

F R O M T H E

C H U R C H O F E N G L A N D .

By JOHN WESLEY, A.M

Printed in the Year 1758.

L O N D O N

Printed by W. STRAHAN, and Sold at the
Foundery in Upper-Moorfields,

MDCCLX.

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Reprinted, in *fac-simile*, for the HISTORICAL CLUB.

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H Y M N S for the P R E A C H E R S among
the M E T H O D I S T S (so called),

By CHARLES WESLEY, A.M.

L O N D O N :

Printed by W. STRAHAN, and Sold at the
Foundry in Upper-Moorfields,

MDCCLX.

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When y^r rev^d Charles
Wesley put this Pam-
phlet into my hands
he remarked—"these
twelve Proofs issued
23 years ago, against se-
parating from y^e Church
of England, are equally
applicable to what
has been lately done
in America: meaning, un-
der y^e Supremacy of Du-
cke. Wm: White.

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R E A S O N S
A G A I N S T A
S E P A R A T I O N
F R O M T H E
C H U R C H o f E N G L A N D.

W H E T H E R it be *lawful* or no (which itself may be disputed, being not so clear a Point as some may imagine) it is by no Means *expedient* for us to separate from the Establish'd Church :

1. BECAUSE it would be a Contradiction to the solemn and repeated Declarations, which we have made in all Manner of Ways, in Preaching, in Print, and in private Conversation :

2. BECAUSE (on this as well as many other Accounts) it would give huge Occasion of Offence to those who seek and desire Occasion, to all the Enemies of GOD and his Truth :

3. BECAUSE it would exceedingly prejudice against us many who fear, yea, who love GOD, and thereby hinder their receiving so much, perhaps any farther, Benefit from our Preaching :

4. BECAUSE it would hinder Multitudes of those who neither love nor fear GOD, from hearing us at all:

5. BECAUSE it would occasion many Hundreds, if not some Thousands of those who are now united with us, to separate from us; yea, and some of those who have a deep Work of Grace in their Souls:

6. BECAUSE it would be throwing Balls of Wild-fire among them that are now quiet in the Land. We are now sweetly united together in Love. We mostly think and speak the same Thing. But this would occasion inconceivable Strife and Contention, between those who left, and those who remained in the Church, as well as between those who left us, and those who remained with us: Nay, and between those very Persons who remained, as they were variously inclined one Way or the other:

7. BECAUSE, whereas Controversy is now asleep, and we in great Measure live peaceably with all Men, so that we are strangely at Leisure to spend our whole Time and Strength, in enforcing plain, practical, vital Religion; (O what would many of our Forefathers have given, to have enjoyed so blessed a Calm?) This would utterly banish Peace from among us, and that without Hope of its Return. It would engage me for one, in a thousand Controversies, both in Publick and Private; (for I should be in Conscience obliged to give the Reasons of my Conduct, and to defend those Reasons against all Opposers) and so take me off from those more useful Labours, which might otherwise employ the short Remainder of my Life:

8. BECAUSE to form the Plan of a New Church would require infinite Time and Care, (which might be far more profitably bestowed) with much more Wisdom and greater Depth and Extensiveness of Thought, than any of us are Masters of:

9. BECAUSE from some having barely entertained a distant Thought of this, evil Fruits have already followed, such as Prejudice against the Clergy in general; and aptness to believe Ill of them; Contentment (not without a Degree of Bitterness), of Clergy-

Clergymen as such, and a Sharpness of Language toward the whole Order, utterly unbecoming either Gentlemen or Christians :

10. BECAUSE the Experiment has been so frequently tried already, and the success never answer'd the Expectation. GOD has since the Reformation raised up from Time to Time many Witnesses of pure Religion. If these lived and died (like *John Arndt*, *Robert Bolton*, and many others) in the Churches to which they belonged, notwithstanding the Wickedness which overflowed both the Teachers and People therein ; they spread the Leaven of true Religion far and wide, and were more and more useful, 'till they went to Paradise. But if upon any Provocation or Consideration whatever, they separated, and founded distinct Parties, their Influence was more and more confined ; they grew less and less useful to others, and generally lost the Spirit of Religion themselves in the Spirit of Controversy :

11. BECAUSE we have melancholy Instances of this, even now before our Eyes. Many have in our Memory left the Church, and formed themselves into distinct Bodies. And certainly some of them, from a real Persuasion, that they should do GOD more Service. But have any separated themselves and prospered ? Have they been either more holy, or more useful than they were before ?

12. BECAUSE by such a Separation we should not only throw away the peculiar Glorifying which GOD has given us, That we do and will suffer all Things for our Brethren's Sake, tho' the more we love them, the less we be loved : But should act in direct Contradiction to that very End, for which we believe GOD hath raised us up. The chief Design of his Providence in sending us out, is undoubtedly, To quicken our Brethren. And the first Message of all our Preachers is, to the lost Sheep of the Church of *England*. Now would it not be a flat Contradiction to this Design, To separate from the

Church? These Things being considered, we cannot apprehend, whether it be lawful in itself or no, that it is lawful for us : were it only on this Ground, That it is by no means expedient.

II. It has indeed been objected, That 'till we do separate, we cannot be a compact, united Body.

IT is true, we cannot 'till then be *a compact united Body*, if you mean by that Expression, A Body distinct from all others. And we have no Desire so to be.

IT has been objected, *Secondly*, "It is mere Cowardice and Fear of Persecution which makes you desire to remain united with them."

THIS cannot be proved. Let every one examine his own Heart, and not judge his Brother.

IT is not probable. We never yet, for any Persecution, when we were in the Midst of it, either turned back from the Work, or even slackened our Pace.

BUT this is certain: That although Persecution many Times proves an unspeakable Blessing to them that suffer it, yet we ought not wilfully to bring it upon ourselves. Nay, we ought to do whatever can lawfully be done, in order to prevent it. We ought to avoid it, so far as we lawfully can; when persecuted in one City, to flee into another. If God should suffer a General Persecution, who would be able to abide it, we know not. Perhaps those who talk loudest, might flee first. Remember the Case of *Dr. Pendleton*.

III. UPON the whole, one cannot but observe, how desirable it is, That all of us who are engaged in the same Work, should think and speak the same Thing, be united in one Judgment, and use one and the same Language.

Do we not all now see *Ourselves*, the *Methodists* (so called) in general, *the Church* and *the Clergy* in a clear Light?

WE look upon *ourselves*, not as the Authors, or Ringleaders of a particular Sect or Party; (It is the farthest Thing from our Thoughts :) but as Messengers of GOD, to those who are Christians in Name, but Heathens in Heart and in Life, to call them back to that from which they are fallen, to real, genuine Christianity. We are therefore Debtors to all these, of whatever Opinion or Denomination: And are consequently to do all that in us lies, to please all, for their Good, to Edification.

WE look upon the *Methodists* (so called) in general, not as any particular Party; (This would exceedingly obstruct the Grand Design, for which we conceive GOD has raised them up), but as living Witnesses in, and to every Party, of that Christianity which we preach; which is hereby demonstrated to be a real Thing, and visibly held out to all the World.

WE look upon *England* as that Part of the World, and *the Church* as that Part of *England*, to which all we who are born and have been brought up therein, owe our first and chief Regard. We feel in ourselves a strong *Στοργή*, a Kind of Natural Affection for our Country, which we apprehend Christianity was never designed either to root out or to impair. We have a more peculiar Concern for our Brethren, for that Part of our Countrymen, to whom we have been joined from our Youth up, by Ties of a Religious as well as a Civil Nature. True it is, that they are in general, *without GOD in the World*. So much the more do our Bowels yearn over them. They do lie in *Darkness and the Shadow of Death*. The more tender is our Compassion for them. And when we have the fullest Conviction of that complicated Wickedness which covers them as a Flood. then do we feel the most (and we desire to feel yet more) of that inexpressible Emotion, with which our blessed LORD beheld *Jerusalem*, and wept and lamented over it. Then are

we the most willing to *spend and to be spent* for them, yea, to *lay down our Lives for our Brethren*.

WE look upon *the Clergy*, not only as a Part of these our Brethren, but as that Part whom God by his adorable Providence, has called to be Watchmen over the rest, for whom therefore they are to give a strict Account. If these then neglect their important Charge, if they do not watch over them with all their Power, they will be of all Men most miserable, and so are entitled to our deepest Compassion. So that to feel, and much more to express either Contempt or Bitterness towards them, betrays an utter Ignorance of ourselves and of the Spirit which we especially should be of.

BECAUSE this is a Point of uncommon Concern, let us consider it a little farther.

THE Clergy wherever we are, are either Friends to the Truth, or Neuters, or Enemies to it.

IF they are Friends to it, certainly we should do every Thing, and omit every Thing we can with a safe Conscience, in order to continue, and if it be possible, increase their Good-will to it.

IF they neither further nor hinder it, we should do all that in us lies, both for their Sakes and for the Sake of their several Flocks, to give their Neutrality the right Turn, that it may change into Love rather than Hatred.

IF they are Enemies, still we should not despair of lessening, if not removing their Prejudice. We should try every Means again and again. We should employ all our Care, Labour, Prudence, joined with fervent Prayer, to overcome Evil with Good, to melt their Hardness into Love.

IT is true, that when any of these openly wrest the Scriptures, and deny the grand Truths of the Gospel, we cannot but declare and defend, at convenient Opportunities, the important Truths which they deny. But in this Case especially we have Need of all Gentleness and Meekness of Wisdom.

Contempt,

Contempt, Sharpness, Bitterness can do no Good *The Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteousness of God.* Harsh Methods have been tried again and again (by two or three unsettled Railers): At *Wedgebury, St. Ives, Cork, Canterbury.* And how did they succeed? They always occasioned numberless Evils; often wholly stopt the Course of the Gospel. Therefore, were it only on a prudential Account, were Conscience unconcerned therein, it should be a sacred Rule to all our Preachers, “No Contempt, no Bitterness to the Clergy.”

2. MIGHT it not be another (at least prudential) Rule, for every *Methodist* Preacher, “Not to frequent any Dissenting Meeting?” (Tho’ we blame none who have been always accustomed to it) But if *we* do this, certainly our People will. Now this is actually separating from the Church. If therefore it is (at least) not expedient to separate, neither is this expedient. Indeed we may attend our Assemblies, and the Church too; because they are at different Hours. But we cannot attend both the Meeting and the Church, because they are at the same Hours.

If it be said, “But at the Church we are fed with Chaff, whereas at the Meeting we have wholesome Food:” We answer, 1. The Prayers of the Church are not Chaff: They are substantial Food for any who are alive to GOD. 2. The LORD’S Supper is not Chaff, but pure and wholesome for all who receive it with upright Hearts. Yea, 3. In almost all the Sermons we hear there, we hear many great and important Truths. And whoever has a spiritual Discernment, may easily separate the Chaff from the Wheat therein. 4. How little is the Case mended at the Meeting? Either the Teachers are *New Light Men*, denying the LORD that bought them, and overturning his Gospel, from the very Foundations: Or they are Predestinarians, and so preach Predestination and Final Perseverance, more

or less. Now whatever this may be to them who were educated therein, yet to those of our Brethren who have lately embraced it, repeated Experience shews it is not wholesome Food: Rather to them it has the Effect of deadly Poison. In a short Time it destroys all their Zeal for GOD. They grow fond of Opinions and Strife of Words. They despise Self-denial and the daily Cross; and to compleat all, wholly separate from their Brethren.

3. NOR is it expedient for any *Methodist* Preacher, to imitate the Dissenters in their Manner of Praying: Either, in his *Tone*: All particular Tones both in Prayer and Preaching should be avoided with the utmost Care: Nor in his *Language*; all his Words should be plain and simple, such as the lowest of his Hearers both use and understand: Or in the *Length* of his Prayer, which should not usually exceed four or five Minutes, either before or after Sermon. One might add, Neither should we sing, like them in a slow, drawling Manner: We sing swift, both because it saves Time, and because it tends to awake and enliven the Soul.

4. *Fourthly*, IF we continue in the Church not by Chance, or for want of Thought, but upon solid and well weighed Reasons, then we should never speak contemptuously of the Church, or any Thing pertaining to it. In some Sense, it is the Mother of us all, who have been brought up therein. We ought never to make her Blemishes Matter of Diversion, but rather of solemn Sorrow before GOD. We ought never to talk ludicrously of them; no, not at all, without clear Necessity. Rather, we should conceal them, as far as ever we can, without bringing Guilt upon our own Conscience. And we should all use every Rational and Scriptural Means, to bring others to the same Temper and Behaviour. I say, *All*; for if some of us are thus minded, and others of an opposite Spirit and Behaviour, this will breed a real Schism among ourselves. It will of Course

divide us into Two Parties; each of which will be liable to perpetual Jealousies, Suspicions and Animosities against the other. Therefore on this Account likewise, it is expedient in the highest Degree, that we should be tender of the Church to which we belong.

5. IN order to secure this End, to cut off all Jealousy and Suspicion from our Friends, and Hope from our Enemies, of our having any Design to separate from the Church, it would be well for every *Methodist* Preacher, who has no Scruple concerning it, to attend the Service of the Church, as often as conveniently he can. And the more we attend it, the more we love it, as constant Experience shews. On the contrary, the longer we abstain from it, the less Desire we have to attend it at all.

6. *Lastly*, WHEREAS we are surrounded on every Side, by those who are equally Enemies to us and to the Church of *England*; and whereas these are long practised in this War, and skilled in all the Objections against it: While our Brethren on the other Hand are quite Strangers to them all, and so on a sudden know not how to answer them: It is highly expedient for every Preacher to be provided with sound Answers to those Objections, and then to instruct the Societies where he labours, how to defend themselves against those Assaults. It would be therefore well for you carefully to read over the *Preservative against unsettled Notions in Religion*, together with *Serious Thoughts concerning Perseverance and Predestination calmly considered*. And when you are Masters of them yourselves, it will be easy for you to recommend and explain them to our Societies: That they may *no more be tost to and fro by every Wind of Doctrine*; but being settled in one Mind and one Judgment, by solid scriptural and rational Arguments, *may grow up in all Things into Him who is our Head, even Jesus Christ*.

JOHN WESLEY.

I think myself bound in Duty, to add my Testimony to my Brother's. His Twelve Reasons against our ever Separating from the Church of *England*, are mine also. I subscribe to them with all my Heart. Only with regard to the First, I am quite clear, that it is neither Expedient, nor **LAWFUL** for *Me* to Separate: And I never had the least Inclination or Temptation so to do. My Affection for the Church is as strong as ever: And I clearly see my Calling; which is, to live and to die in her Communion. This, therefore. I am determined to do, the Lord being my Helper.

I have subjoined the **HYMNS** for the Lay-Preachers; still farther to *secure this End, to cut off all Jealousy and Suspicion from our Friends, or Hope from our Enemies, of our having any Design of ever Separating from the Church.* I have no secret Reserve, or distant Thought of it. I never had. Would to God all the Methodist Preachers were, in this respect, like minded with

CHARLES WESLEY.

In this fac-simile Reprint, the Hymns have been omitted.

*Chas. R. Hale,
Secretary of the Historical Club.*

THE HISTORICAL CLUB.

Some months since, a Club was started with the above name by a few Clergy for the purpose of re-publishing, in *fac-simile*, by photo-lithographic process, certain very important documents, connected with the early history of the American Church. Some of the manuscripts and papers are contained in the archives of the General Convention, others are in the hands of private collectors. It was thought that an effort by which these papers should be multiplied, and, in their integrity, be placed beyond the possibility of destruction, would commend itself to those interested in historical studies, especially those pertaining to our ecclesiastical annals.

The papers thus far issued have been as follows:

(1.) Minutes of the meeting of Clergy and Laity at New Brunswick, New Jersey, in May, 1784, preliminary to a General Convention, in the handwriting of the Rev. Dr. (afterwards Bishop) Benjamin Moore, with the attestation of Bishop White.

(2.) Proceedings of a similar meeting in New York, in October, 1784; from a very rare "Broadside" print of the time.

(3.) "Plan for obtaining Consecration," signed by the members of the General Convention of 1785.

(4.) Letter of the English Bishops, with their autograph signatures, in answer to the Address of the General Convention of 1785 asking for the Succession.

(5.) The Black Letter Act of Parliament authorizing the Archbishop of Canterbury to consecrate Bishops for America.

(6.) The autograph letter of the Archbishop enclosing the above to the Committee of Convention.

(7.) Memoranda referring to the Consecration of Bishops White and Provoost.

(8.) The Letters of Orders of Bishop Seabury.

(10.) The Letter of Consecration of Bishop Seabury.

(11.) One of the earliest Letters of Orders given by Bishop Seabury.

(12.) "Reasons for not leaving the Church of England," by John Wesley, reprinted from a copy given by Charles Wesley to Bishop White, and containing an interesting note in the handwriting of Bishop White.

Among a number of valuable documents placed at the disposal of the Club, and which will be published as rapidly as the incoming of subscriptions permits, are:

The "Concordat" signed by Bishop Seabury and the Scottish Bishops; An account of the Consecration, by one *sitular* Bishop, of Dr. John Carroll, the first Romish Bishop in the United States; reprinted from a very rare contemporaneous pamphlet. The celebrated Letters of Dr. Coke to Bishops Seabury and White. A very interesting Letter from the Rev. Charles Wesley to the Rev. Dr. Chandler.

Should the number of subscribers warrant the expense, the "Sunday Service for the Methodists of North America," prepared by John Wesley, and containing his noble testimony to the Prayer Book of the Church of England, may be reproduced.

The plan of publication adopted by the Club is as follows: Those associated—and every one interested is invited to unite in the effort—agree to pay \$10 annually, *the whole amount* to be spent in the production of *fac-similes* of important manuscripts and other valuable documents. The number of copies will be limited. *Five* copies of each paper will be mailed promptly to each subscriber; a certain number will, *for the present*, be reserved for such as may subsequently subscribe. The Council of Publication reserve the right, in the event of producing certain papers of a controversial nature, to issue a larger number than usual, and to offer the additional copies for sale, the avails of such sales being employed in producing additional *fac-similes*.

The Council of Publication consists at present of the Rev. W. S. Perry, D.D., Historiographer of the American Church, and the Rev. Charles R. Hale. Correspondence with reference to the purposes of this Club is invited, and should be addressed, and the subscription of any who may desire to unite in this interesting scheme sent, to the Secretary of the Club,

THE REV. CHARLES R. HALE,

123 Fifth Avenue, New York.

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE EARNESTLY SOLICITED. *Promptness in subscribing will be to the advantage of all parties, enabling the Club to proceed more rapidly in its work, and each subscriber to secure complete sets of papers. All monies received are spent, and as fast as received, in publishing, and, on the other hand, no paper is sent to press until the Club has funds in hand to pay for printing the same.*

In accordance with a provision mentioned above, and in order to the general circulation of a document so interesting as this pamphlet, the Council have permitted an edition to be struck off for Mr. WHITTAKER from the plates prepared for the Club.

